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Letter dated 17 July 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Ethiopia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to forward herewith a letter addressed to you by Seyoum Mesfin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, concerning the recent communications of the President of the State of Eritrea (see annex). I would also like to request you to circulate the letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Negash **Kebret**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 17 July 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Ethiopia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

17 July 2008

I wished to write to you with reference to the recent communications addressed to you and the Security Council by the President of Eritrea, the latest of which is dated 15 July 2008.

I have to say that these communications barely deserve a response. Indeed, since they contain a number of manifest fabrications it might be most sensible to ignore them with the contempt they deserve. However, there is always a danger that silence might be taken as a sign of acceptance of the content, or even as an indication of weakness or vulnerability.

I am sure the Government of the United States itself is fully able to reply to the wild and extraordinary attacks upon it. It needs no help from us. I can, however, make clear that the references to Musa Ali are pure invention. There has been no Ethiopian military takeover of any territory, Eritrean or Djiboutian. This border area, essentially a mountain peak, is a long way inland from Ras Doumeira, the point of Eritrean aggression against Djibouti in April. According to Eritrea, Ethiopian forces took over Eritrean and Djiboutian territory at Musa Ali. Exactly why Eritrea should keep quiet about this and itself invade Djibouti as a response is incomprehensible.

It would be easy, of course, to verify from the UNMEE contingent which is still deployed at Bure, an Ethiopian town close to said area, if indeed there is such a situation in and around Musa Ali as claimed by Eritrea. Any Security Council fact-finding mission to the area can also easily verify Djibouti's earlier claim of Eritrean aggression as well as the situation at Musa Ali. It might be noted that Djibouti itself has made no such claim about Musa Ali.

We have surely now come to a point where even the most diehard friends of Eritrea, even its most irresponsible supporters, can no longer hide the fact that Eritrea has become a major liability for peace in the Horn of Africa. It has gone to war with almost all its neighbours, with the Sudan, Yemen, Ethiopia and Djibouti. It has continuously supported armed opposition movements, even terrorist organizations, in the region. It has suspended its membership of the regional organization, IGAD, and has consistently and flagrantly set itself in defiance of any number of Security Council resolutions and has demolished the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement as well as forcing out a United Nations mission entrusted with the task of peacekeeping along the border with Ethiopia. It makes no secret of these actions.

Indeed, it is hard to deny that Eritrea has become a rogue State. It has no commitment to peace and security and has rather become a clear liability to stability in the Horn of Africa. In its most recent communications to the Security Council, Eritrea's leadership also demonstrates a shameless ability to fabricate allegations no matter how implausible.

In these circumstances, Ethiopia believes the Security Council should take the challenge posed by Eritrea most seriously. Eritrea is not so much a challenge for

Ethiopia as a challenge to the security of the Greater Horn and surrounding areas as its latest incursions into Djibouti clearly demonstrate. The Security Council must not continue to shirk its responsibility for peace and security in the subregion.

Eritrea must fulfil the international obligations to which it committed itself in 2000, and its regional obligations to peace and stability. These would allow for the restoration of security in the Horn of Africa, for the real possibility of peace in Somalia, and, indeed, for the much needed normalization of relations throughout our region.

(*Signed*) Seyoum **Mesfin**
Minister